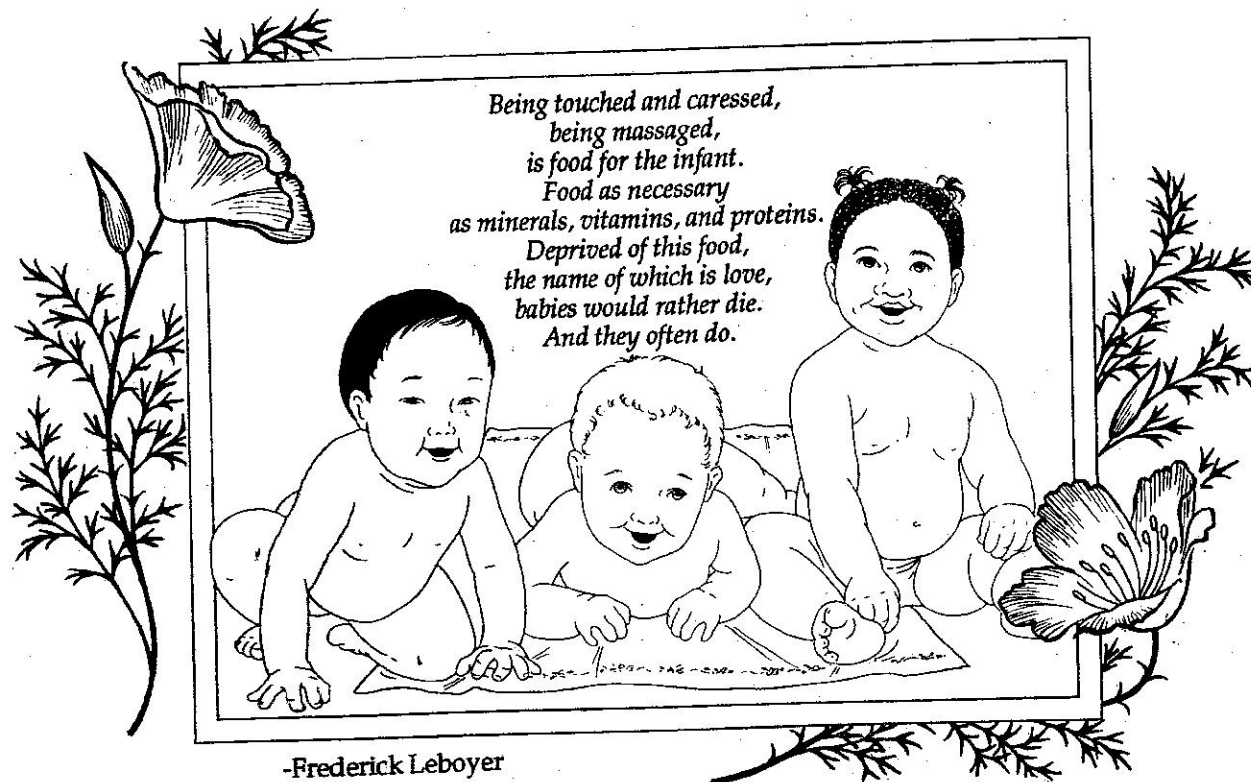


Nurturing Touch: ***Instruction in the Art of Infant Massage***



Introduction:

Massaging a baby is an art. Our purpose is to introduce you to the nurturing expression of touch through massage. This booklet can be used in conjunction with the video, *Nurturing Touch: Instruction in the Art of Infant Massage*, or it may be used independently to help guide you as you learn to massage your baby.

Benefits of Massage:

Massaging your baby is done with your heart and not just your hands. Your gentle touch during massage, and at other times, communicates a message of love to your baby. Your baby needs your loving touch to grow emotionally and physically strong. Massage helps your baby to relax and let go of tension. Many parents happily report that after a massage, their babies sleep better, have an easier time with feeding, and experience fewer stomach upsets.

Young babies can seem so tiny and fragile. Studies with premature babies show that massage seems to improve digestion and increase baby's weight gain. Massaging your baby helps you get in touch with your baby. It builds your con-

fidence in being able to understand your baby's unique body language. This confidence can help you deal with other tasks of parenting, both now and as your baby grows.

How to Use the Video:

Watch the video in its entirety before beginning to practice Infant Massage with your baby.

Always go at your baby's pace. Press the pause button on the VCR to slow the viewing process or skip over an area if your baby doesn't seem willing or ready. Come back and try it again later.

Depending on the age and stage of development of your baby, you may want to learn to **massage one** area of the body before proceeding to the **next area**. (First "legs" then "tummy," etc.)

Enjoy this wonderful nurturing time with your baby!

Nurturing Touch: Instruction in the Art of Infant Massage



Before Beginning to Massage Your Baby

Create a special time for you and your baby each day. Be flexible. Some days you may have more time than others. Perhaps you have a quiet half hour when baby awakens from his nap. Maybe you have a few minutes while changing his diaper or just before his bath.

Be sensitive to your baby's moods and try to choose a time when he is not too tired or hungry. He will not be able to relax and respond to you if his needs are unmet.

Observe your baby and watch for a time when she is alert, quiet, and receptive. This is the best time to start the massage interaction.

Create a space that is comfortable, warm, and free from distractions. Warmth is especially important for newborns who tend to lose body heat rapidly. Find a sunny spot on your bed, use a space heater to warm the room, or you may do the massage with baby partially clothed.

You may want to have a soft blanket to place over your baby during the massage. A soft pillow to place baby on provides a feeling of security and warmth for young infants.

Be Relaxed

Make sure you are comfortable. Sit in a way that is restful, cross-legged on a couch or bed with baby in front of you or lean back against the wall with baby laying on your extended legs.

Be aware of your needs and create a time for massage when you feel relaxed enough to put your concerns and distractions aside for a while. Many mothers and fathers find themselves relaxing and letting go of tension along with their babies during a massage.

Parent's Relaxation Exercise

To help yourself relax, take a slow, deep breath. Continue breathing slowly and deeply as you let go of tension throughout your body. Since many of us hold tension in our shoulders and neck, it may help to slowly rotate your neck from side to side. Gently lift and roll your shoulders. Breathe deeply throughout the massage to increase your enjoyment and help your baby learn how to relax.

What You Will Need:

- ♥ **Oil.** Use a small amount to allow your hands to move smoothly during the massage. Use an unscented, cold-pressed fruit or vegetable oil such as sweet almond, apricot, or a blend.
- ♥ **Towel or Quilt.** To lay baby on.
- ♥ **Pillow.** To help newborns feel more secure. The support of the pillow helps reduce their reflexive tendency to startle.
- ♥ **Extra diapers and protective cloth.** To put under baby.
- ♥ **Change of clothes.** To dress your baby after the massage.

Nurturing Touch:

Instruction in the Art of Infant Massage

During the Massage:

Ask Permission and Listen to Baby's Cues.

Through your body language and voice you communicate respect for your baby and her body. *Listen to your baby's cues* and respect her right to say "yes" or "no" to the massage. Each baby is an individual and will respond uniquely in his or her own way every time you share massage. Listen and watch your baby's distinct ways of communicating with you.

As you undress your baby, tell her it is massage time. Give your baby a special cue by pouring oil into your hand and rubbing your palms together. Show your palms to your baby and ask, "May I massage you now?" As you follow this routine each time, your baby will gradually begin to anticipate her massage.

Be Flexible. Infant Massage is not a technique done to the baby. It is an interactive communication that flows *between* you and your baby. Observe your baby's communication and remain flexible in the following areas:

1. Number of strokes you share in the massage. Watch your baby for signs of enjoyment, over stimulation, or when it is time to move on to another stroke or a different part of her body.
2. Firmness of pressure used. Usually babies like a gentle, yet firm secure pressure.
3. Rhythm of strokes. Use the image of a calm ocean's waves to guide you in finding a suitable rhythm for your baby.
4. Length of time to massage. Each baby determines what is appropriate each time. Watch for her cues to tell you what is right.

Eye Contact — Offering your eye contact allows you to deepen your connection with your baby.

Facial Expression — Be aware of what your face is communicating during the massage. It is like a mirror for your baby and gives her information about herself, the massage, and your special relationship.

Vocal Contact — Talk and sing gently to your baby during the massage. Music may add a wonderful quality to your time together.

The lullaby being played in the background of this video is an arrangement of a Bengali chant. The words mean, "I love you, my dear baby."

Touch Relaxation

Touch Relaxation may be used throughout infancy and childhood, either with the massage interaction or on its own, separate from the massage. It is a valuable skill to help reduce stress and increase your child's feeling of well-being.

Remember . . . Use a gentle and relaxed contact in the area where you sense your baby is holding or tense.

Contact this area in a way that allows your baby to feel the support and security of your hand when she does let go and relax. For example, if doing *Touch Relaxation* for the arm, support under the arm in the elbow region, so that your hand can receive the softened arm as your baby relaxes.

Take deep breaths and relax yourself. Your baby picks up sensory messages from your touch. Be aware of what your touch is conveying.

Gently and softly pat the area, giving baby a touch cue to "let go." It is helpful to imagine your baby's tension releasing.

Give a verbal cue by saying, "You can relax your arm..." or "let go..."

As soon as you feel the baby soften and relax, give your baby acknowledgement verbally and with your facial expression, "That's wonderful;" or "You relaxed yourself!"

The purpose of Touch Relaxation is to teach your baby how she can relax and release tension. It is a *conditioned response* which is learned through the repetition of consistent *messages* communicated to your baby with your voice and touch. The rewards for your efforts will be great, and if practiced repeatedly, may help your child cope with stress for years to come!

Nurturing Touch: Instruction in the Art of Infant Massage

Infant Cues

Your baby uses cues to tell you what he needs. At times, your baby may be "willing" to engage with you; at other times he may be unwilling." There may be a mixture of both willingness and unwillingness cues. Watch your baby and respond to the cues that appear most prominent.

As you interact with your baby, she may change the cues she is giving to you. For example, she may express some unwillingness cues, such as turning away, fussing and avoiding eye contact. You respond by reducing the amount of stimulation, perhaps pausing and just holding the area being massaged. Your baby reacts by turning back toward you, engaging in eye and face contact, and letting you know that she is ready to resume the massage interaction. At other times, her cues will signal the need for a cuddle break or to end the massage.

Willingness Cues:

- Eye contact
- Looking at your face
- Stilling (stops moving)
- Smooth movement of arms and legs
- Turning eyes or head toward you
- Smiling
- Babbling, talking, cooing sounds
- Raising head or reaching out to you
- Eyes wide and bright
- Hand to mouth

Unwillingness Cues:

- Fussiness/Crying
- Turning head away
- Coughing/choking sounds
- Frowning or grimacing face
- Strong back arching
- Eyes turning away or dull looking
- Spitting up/vomiting
- Pulling away/squirming/kicking
- Hiccoughs
- Wrinkled forehead

Listening To Baby

During the massage, your baby may "have a story to tell" and you may choose to "listen" to what the baby has to say. Babies are so sensitive and are going through an amazing number of adjustments within the first year of their lives. Even though you may not *understand* his story, you may *accept* what he is communicating now, before he speaks with words.

He may tell his story through various types of cries or by making sounds. Usually this is accompanied by a willingness to make eye contact at the same time, as though he is reaching out to be seen and heard. By listening with your heart in this way you let him know that he is respected and cared for, and that he and his feelings are important.

Remember, in listening to your baby... Take long, deep breaths and relax. Clear your thoughts and place all your attention on your baby. It may be appropriate to stop the massage and just focus on his story; maintaining your touch by placing your hands gently and securely on his body.

Connect with your baby, and if possible, establish eye-to-eye contact. Let her know you are there to listen with your heart and mind. As your baby needs, offer the comfort and security of rocking, caressing, or walking. If your baby has shared and released feelings through strong crying, make certain you give the support of loving reassurance and nurturing touch. Afterwards, you may choose to resume the massage interaction, depending on the needs of both you and your baby.



Infant Massage Strokes

Strokes for the Legs and Feet

Begin by massaging your baby's legs. Babies of any age usually enjoy having their legs massaged. Young babies enjoy the feeling of relaxation in their legs after a massage, and toddlers who may be experiencing "growing pains" appreciate the relief a massage gives.

When you massage your baby's legs, do all the strokes on one leg, then repeat the same strokes on her other leg. By doing this, you gradually encourage relaxation in each of your baby's legs.

Indian Milking

Support your baby's foot with one hand and stroke her leg beginning at the buttocks and moving down the leg toward the ankle. Switch hands, holding baby's foot with your other hand and stroking your baby's leg down to her ankle.

It may help to hold your hand in a "C" shape while stroking your baby's leg. Continue repeating the milking stroke alternating your hands so that you first stroke the outside and then the inside of the leg.

Visualize stress and tension leaving your baby's body as you massage.



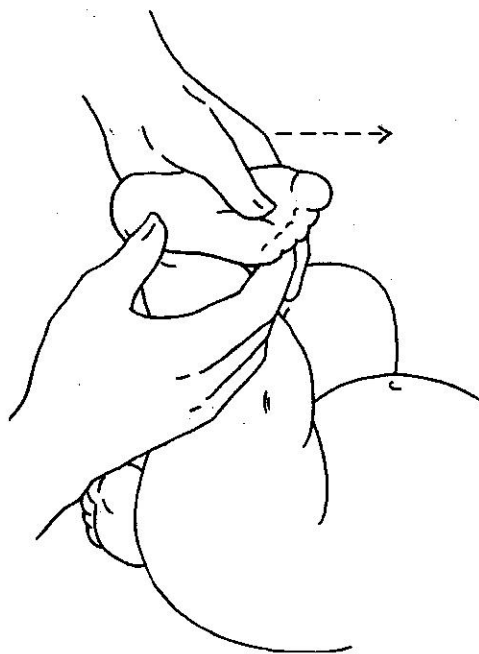
Squeeze and Twist

Using the "C" shape of your hands, starting at your baby's hip and holding her leg with both hands close together, alternate a gentle squeezing and twisting motion from her hip to her ankle.



Stroke up Sole of Foot

Begin by stroking the bottom of baby's foot from the heel to the toes with your thumbs, one after another.



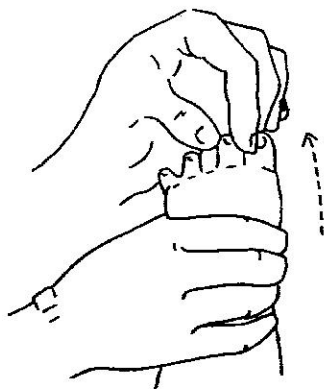
Strokes for the Legs and Feet

Squeeze Each Toe

Gently squeeze each toe. This is a great time to recite:

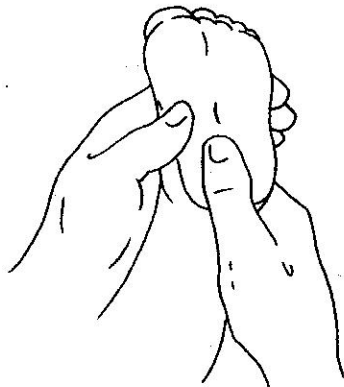
*This little piggy went to market,
this little piggy stayed home,
this little piggy had pizza,
and this little piggy did, too.*

This little piggy said, wee, wee all the way home.



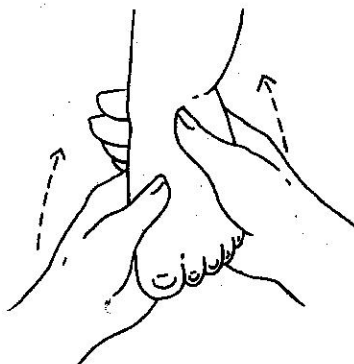
Walking

Press gently all over the bottom of her foot with your thumbs.



Stroking Top of Foot

Stroke the top of the foot toward the ankle.



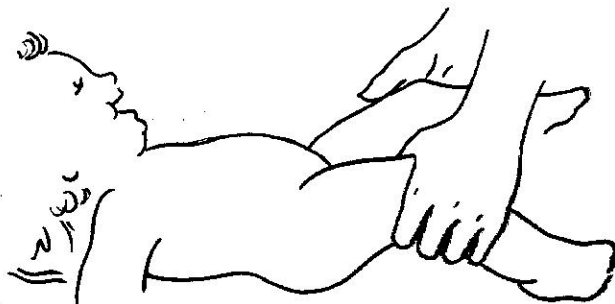
Swedish Milking

Support baby's foot with your hand. Using a "C" shaped hand, stroke her leg from the ankle to the hip with a smooth downward stroke. Alternate hands to massage both sides of your baby's leg.



Touch Relaxation

This is a good time to use Touch Relaxation by supporting baby's legs behind her knees and gently rocking her legs to encourage her to relax and release any tension she may be feeling in her legs. Tell your baby to "relax" and "let go" as you supportively rock her legs, and praise her when you feel her respond to your touch and voice.



Strokes for the Stomach

These strokes help tone the intestinal system and relieve gas and constipation. It is *very important* that these strokes be done in a *circular clockwise direction* on your baby's stomach. If your baby is lying on her back, imagine that her head is at 12 o'clock (on the face of a clock) and that her feet are at 6 o'clock. Your hands move in the same direction as the hands of a clock.

Another way to remember the correct direction for these strokes is to imagine you are making a *right hand turn on a steering wheel*.

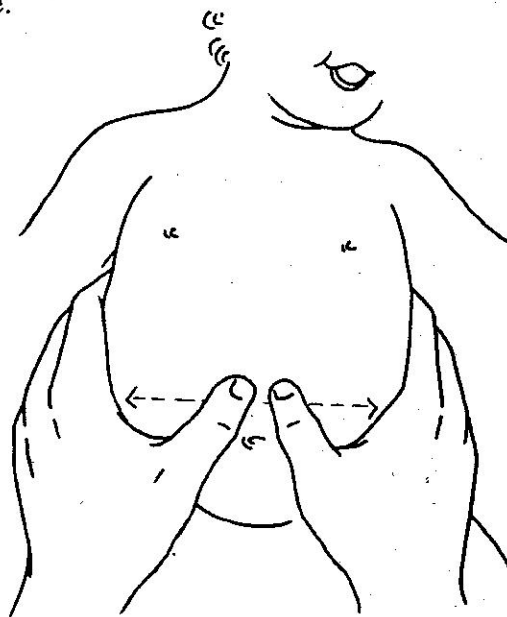
Water Wheel

Using the sides of your hands, make paddling strokes on your baby's stomach, one hand following the other, as if you were scooping sand toward yourself. Start below the ribs and move into the lower abdomen. Stroke hand over hand with a gentle but firm pressure.



Thumbs to Sides

With your thumbs at the level of baby's bellybutton, stroke out to her sides. Be gentle and do not poke.



Sun Moon

Your left hand begins by making a full circle on baby's stomach, moving clockwise. Your right hand makes a half circle or crescent moon in a clockwise direction starting at about 10 o'clock on your baby's tummy and stroke down to 4 o'clock. Then lift your right hand up and over your left hand, making the continuous circular "sun" strokes. Massage around and around with your hands like the hands of a clock.



Strokes for the Stomach

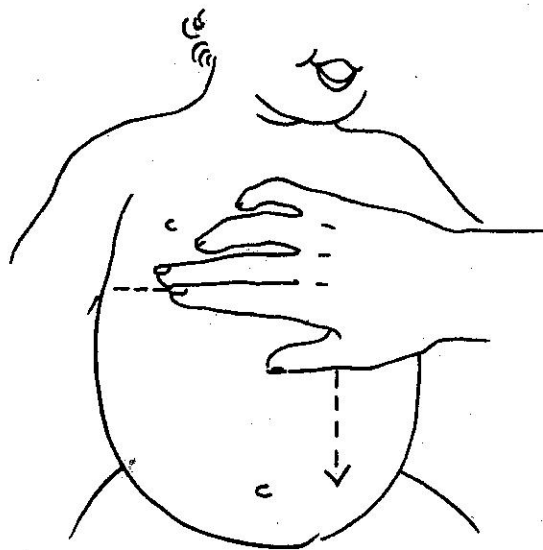
I Love You

This is a three-part stroke which spells out the message "I love you" to your baby. Baby loves a high-pitched voice saying "I love you" as you share this stroke.

"I" Make a vertical I-shaped stroke on the left side of *your baby's* stomach.



"Love" Make a backward upside down L-shaped stroke moving from *your* left to right, as if you are reading words on a page.



"You" Make an upside down U-shaped stroke from *your* left to right.



Strokes for the Arms and Hands

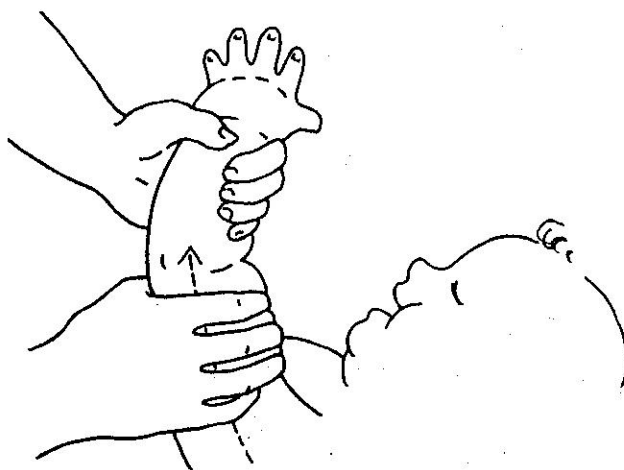
These strokes are similar to those for the legs and feet. Your baby receives the benefits of increased circulation and warmth for his arms and hands as well as a release of tension.

Begin with Touch Relaxation to let your baby know you would like to massage his arms and hands.

Never forcibly pull your baby's arms away from his body to do a stroke, but gently stroke his arm allowing him to relax and gradually extend his arm to you. Continue to use Touch Relaxation throughout the massage to encourage your baby to let go and relax his arm.

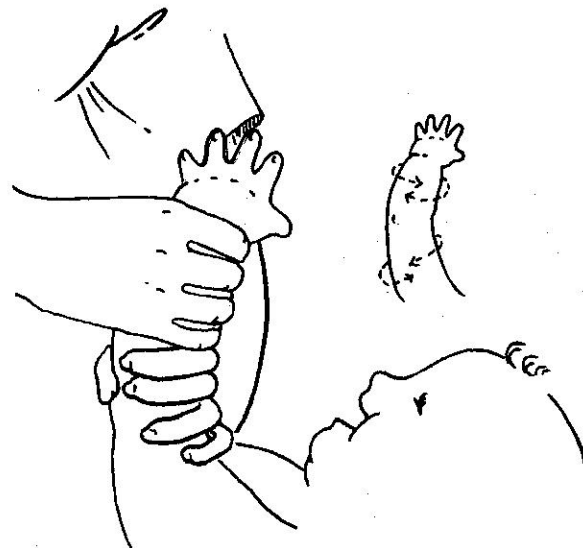
Indian Milking

Hold baby's wrist with in your hand. With your other hand in the "C" shape, start at his shoulder and stroke smoothly down to his hand. Alternate hands and repeat the stroke. Continue this stroke, alternating hands, making contact with the inner and outer areas of the arm. Imagine stress and tension leaving baby's body through his fingertips.



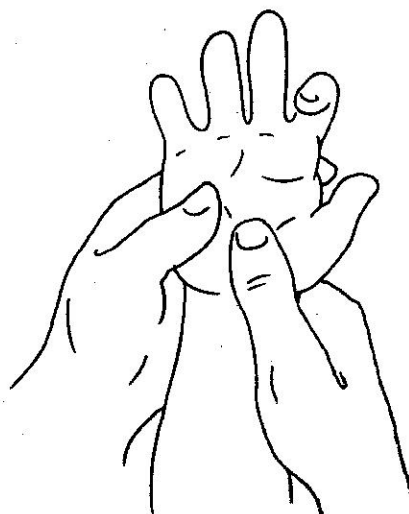
Squeeze and Twist

Begin at your baby's upper arm, use the "C" shape of your hands and slowly squeeze and twist both hands moving down baby's arm to his wrist using gentle pressure.



Open Hand

Stroke baby's palm gently with your thumbs. If your baby is making a tight fist in a reflex response, gently stroke the tops of his fingers to encourage him to relax and open his hand to you.



Strokes for the Face

A baby's face can have a great deal of tension from sucking, teething and crying. The strokes for the face can help relieve these tensions.

Do not use oil when massaging baby's face, since oil may clog her pores and contribute to facial rash.

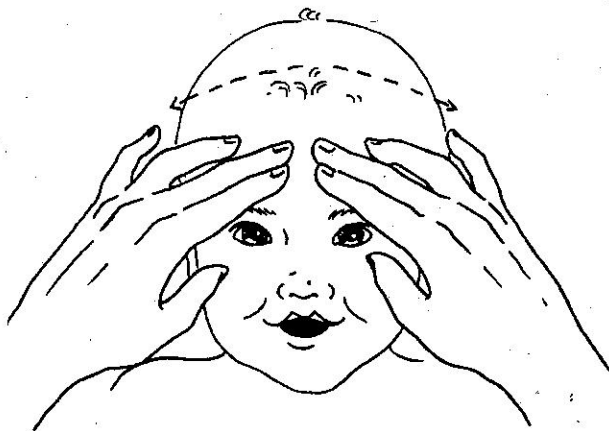
Ask Permission

Begin by making small circles on the sides of baby's head as a cue that you would like to massage her face. Because the face is a sensitive area, for some babies, it takes time to become comfortable receiving massage on the face. Proceed slowly and observe baby's cues.



Open Book

Using your fingertips, start at the center of baby's forehead and gently stroke out to the side, as if smoothing the pages of a book.



Thumbs Across Brows

Place your thumbs lightly on the inner corners of baby's brows and *lightly* stroke over her eyes to the outer corners of the eyebrows.



Strokes for the Back

The back massage strokes are very relaxing, and are favorites of both babies and toddlers. Lay your baby on his stomach, either on the floor on a soft quilt or on your lap with your legs outstretched. Talk to your baby while he is on his tummy. Your voice contact is important since he can't see you.

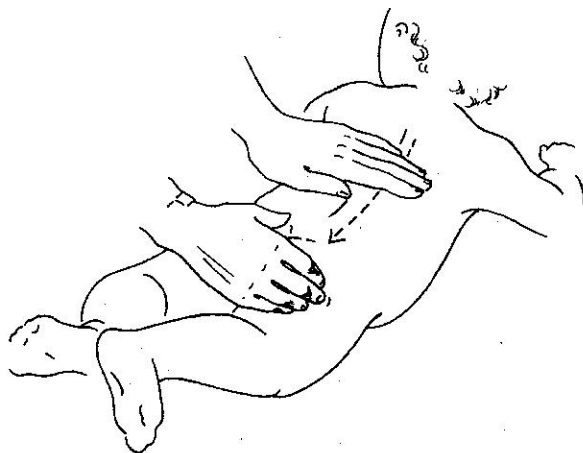
Back and Forth

Begin with both hands together at the top of baby's back. Glide your relaxed hands back and forth, in opposite directions, going down his back to the buttocks, then up to his shoulders, and back down again.



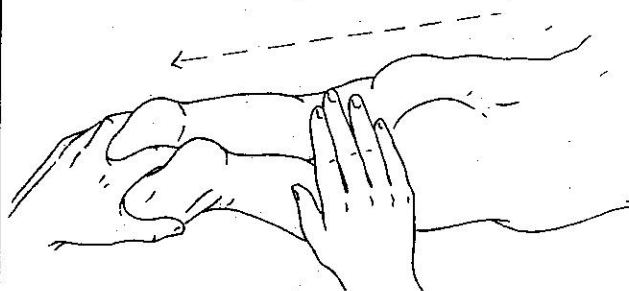
Swooping to Bottom

Cup baby's buttocks with one hand. Beginning at baby's neck, your other hand glides down smoothly to the buttocks. Repeat this swooping stroke several times.



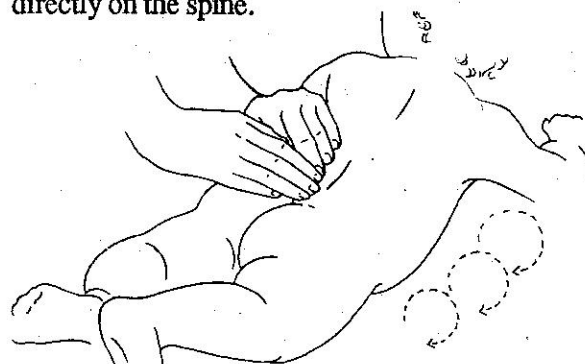
Swooping to Ankles

Support your baby's feet with one hand and repeat the swooping strokes with your other hand moving all the way down the legs to baby's feet.



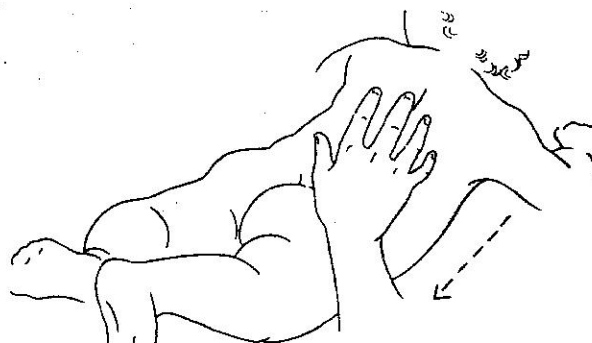
Small Circles All Over Back

Use your fingertips to massage small circles on both sides of baby's spine moving all over his back. Be sure to massage small circles on baby's hips and buttocks, too. Avoid doing these circles directly on the spine.



Combing

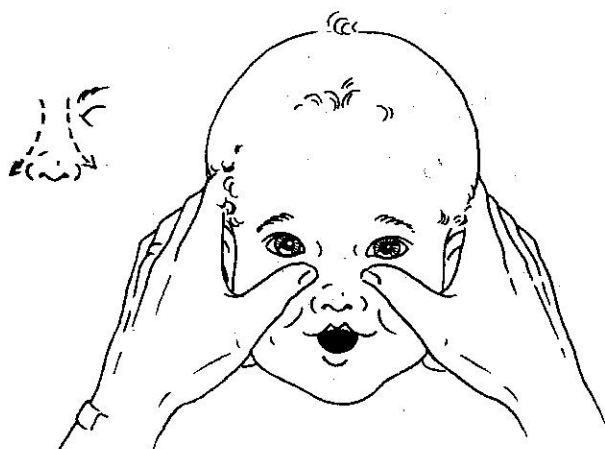
With your hand open and fingers spread apart, gently "comb" your baby's back starting at his neck and moving to his buttocks. Your strokes become gradually lighter each time. Repeat several times. End with a very light "feather" touch. You may also begin with baby's head and stroke down his back.



Strokes for the Face

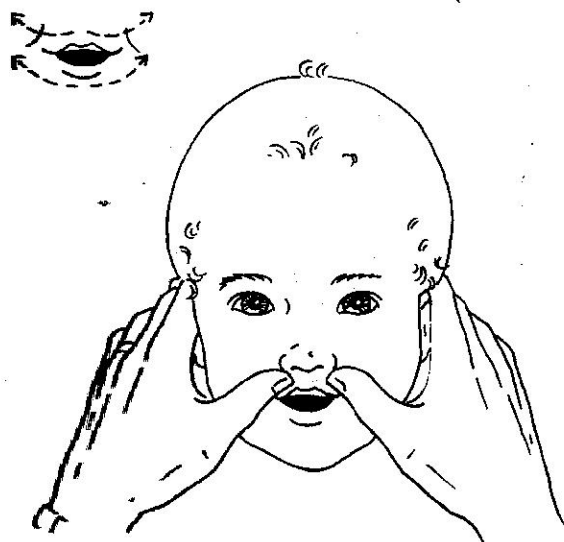
Stroke Down Sides of Nose

With your thumbs or forefingers at the center of the brows, stroke down on either side of the nose and then stop and press gently. This can help clear baby's sinuses.



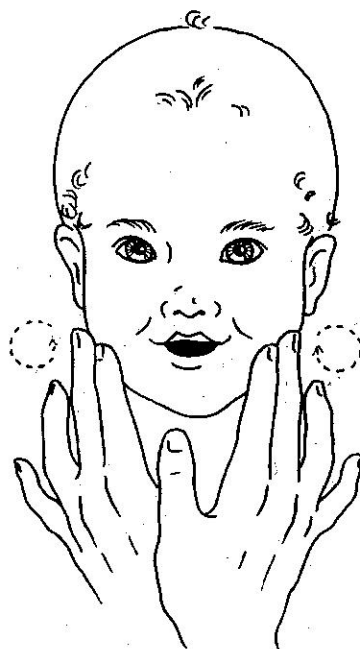
Smile on Upper and Lower Lips

With your thumbs, stroke across the upper lip moving into the cheek, then stroke across the lower lip and into the cheek. This is like drawing a smile on your baby's face, and helps soothe the muscles used for sucking.



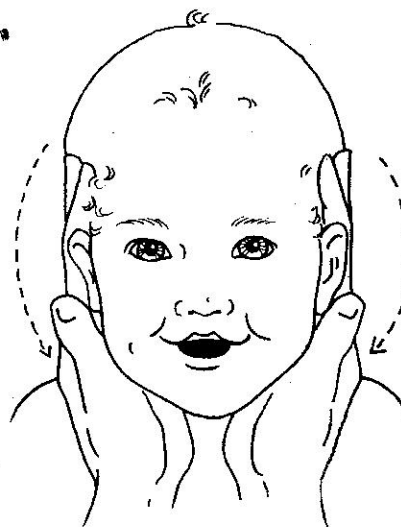
Small Circles Around Jaw

Make small circles around baby's jaw with your fingertips. Use a very gentle touch. These strokes can soothe the muscles used for sucking and may help relieve some of the discomfort of teething.



Over Ears and Under Chin

Finish the facial massage by stroking with your fingertips in front and around the backs of baby's ears, then continue down under the chin. This stroke helps relax the jaw and massages the lymph nodes in this area.



Remember



It may seem impossible to remember how to do all of the strokes properly. The best way to learn to massage your baby is to do it for at least a few minutes each day.

As you learn new strokes, continue to use the previously learned strokes as well. Your baby will let you know which parts of the massage are his favorites and you can repeat those often. Try to repeat each stroke at least two or three times, or more if baby is enjoying it.

Your baby may become fussy or cry as you massage him. This is often a normal response as he releases tension. If your baby becomes especially upset or seems overtired, listen to what he is saying. He may need a cuddle break, to eat, or nap in your arms. He may need to express how he is feeling and tell you his story. Your baby may become hungry or sleepy soon after a massage. This is normal. Don't make him wait to be fed or put to bed.

Parents often report that their babies seem to be **more relaxed** following a massage. Some babies **may sleep** longer and more deeply.

Most important of all, you and your baby benefit from the special feeling of closeness that develops because of massage. No one else can give your baby *your* unique loving touch. Through your nurturing massage, he will grow to know and trust you in a special way.

In Conclusion . . .

Teaching by example is the most effective way to teach our children.

Let your massage time teach qualities and values that may last a lifetime.

Include in your time together expressions of . . .

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| ♥ Love | ♥ Trust |
| ♥ Respect | ♥ Security |
| ♥ Compassion | ♥ Self-esteem |
| ♥ Kindness | ♥ Sincerity |

Touch is your baby's first language. Through the nurturing touch of infant massage, you communicate deep love and respect to your baby in a language he or she understands well.